

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested. Claims 1-5 are cancelled. Claims 6-19 have been added and are submitted for the Examiner's reconsideration.

In the Office Action, claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rogers (U.S. Patent No. 6,018,719) in view of Suliman (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0053980). Claims 1-5 are cancelled, and claims 6-19 are submitted in place thereof. It is submitted that the new claims are patentably distinguishable over the references.

The Rogers patent describes an electronic system for registering product transactions. A point of sale register and an associated bar code scanner receive registration information that is delivered to a local computer system located at the point of sale and stored in its database. As an example, a product serial number is entered, such as by scanning a serial number printed on the package of the product, and the local computer determines if the serial number is valid and, if so, updates the local database. (See Figs. 1 and 2; col. 3, lines 48-67; and col. 5, lines 9-12 and 61-67). The local computer is also linked to a central computer system and periodically transmits the verified product serial numbers and associated information to the central computer system in batches. (See Fig. 4; and col. 6, lines 38-48). As acknowledged by the Examiner, Rogers does not disclose or suggest transmission of a notice requesting that the purchaser provide comments on the product and does not disclose or suggest that such a notice is based on the information recorded in a recording device. Thus, Rogers is not at all concerned with transmitting questionnaires.

The Suliman application relates to the anonymous collection of product registration information from a consumer. A system receives the product registration information and a consumer identifier, stores the product registration information in a customer account associated with the consumer identifier, communicates the product registration information and the consumer identifier to a manufacturer of the product, and receives messages from the manufacturer regarding the product that may be transmitted to the consumer or stored in a mailbox that the consumer can access. (See Fig. 3; paragraphs [0028]-[0029], [0037]-[0040], [0064]-[0066] and [0068]-[0071]). The publication also describes that the registration system may generate *post-purchase behavior and satisfaction* questionnaires, transmit the questionnaires to consumers, and transmit the response information for the questionnaires to the manufacturers. (See paragraph [0070]). However, the publication does not disclose or suggest receiving and storing purchaser responses to a questionnaire that is available to the purchaser *at a time the purchaser provides the registration code and the purchaser information*. In fact, the responses to such a *post-purchase behavior and satisfaction questionnaire* would not provide useful information if the questionnaire were to be transmitted to the consumer at the time that the product was purchased and registered.

Neither Rogers nor Suliman suggests:

a questionnaire data storage unit operable to receive and store purchaser responses to a first questionnaire that is available to the purchaser at a time the purchaser provides the registration code and the purchaser information, to transmit a second questionnaire to the purchaser at a predetermined time subsequent to the receipt and storage of the registration code and purchaser information, and to receive and store purchaser responses to the second questionnaire

as called for in claim 6.

Further, Rogers is not at all concerned with transmitting questionnaires or the responses thereto, and Suliman describes transmitting the response information for the questionnaires to the manufacturers but does not disclose or suggest combining the purchaser responses to the questionnaire with responses obtained from other purchasers and does not disclose or suggest outputting data based on the combined responses.

Neither Rogers nor Suliman suggests:

a questionnaire data processing unit operable to receive the stored purchaser information, registration code and customer identifier from said customer data unit, to determine whether said questionnaire data storage unit is to transmit an interview questionnaire to the purchaser based on at least part of the purchaser information, to combine the purchaser responses to at least one of the first questionnaire, the second questionnaire, and the interview questionnaire with responses obtained from other purchasers, and to output data based on the combined responses

as defined in claim 6.

It follows that neither Rogers nor Suliman, whether taken alone or in combination, discloses or suggests the combination recited in claim 6, and claim 6 is therefore patentably distinct and unobvious over the references.

Claims 7-10 depend from claim 6, and each further defines and limits the invention set out in the independent claim. It follows that each of claims 7-10 likewise defines a combination that is patentably distinguishable over the references.

Further regarding claim 8, neither Rogers nor Suliman discloses or suggests converting the purchaser information, the

registration code, or the customer identifier into another format.

Additionally, concerning claim 9, neither Rogers nor Suliman discloses or suggests receiving a customer inquiry together with a customer identifier, neither reference discloses or suggests outputting a reply to the customer inquiry, and neither reference discloses or suggests storing the customer inquiry and the reply in association with the customer identifier.

Also, as to claim 10, neither Rogers nor Suliman discloses or suggests receiving a stored customer inquiry and reply, and neither reference discloses or suggests combining information based on the customer inquiry and the reply with other information based on other customer inquiries and replies.

Independent claim 11 defines an information processing system that includes the information processing apparatus defined in claim 6. Therefore, claim 11 is patentably distinguishable over the references at least for the same reasons. Additionally, neither reference discloses or suggests displaying a menu that permits purchasers to select between a menu item for registering a purchased product and a menu item for responding to a first questionnaire, as defined in claim 11.

Independent claim 12 relates to an information processing method that includes limitations similar to those set out in claim 6. It follows that claim 12 is patentably distinguishable over the cited references at least for the same reasons.

Claims 13-15 depend from claim 12 and are patentably distinguishable over the references at least for the same reasons. Moreover, claim 13 includes limitations similar to those set out in claim 8, claim 14 includes limitations similar to those set out in claim 9, and claim 15 includes limitations similar to those recited in claim 10, and therefore each claim

is further distinguishable over the cited art at least for the same reasons.

Independent claim 16 calls for a recording medium recorded with a computer readable program for carrying out the method of claim 12. Claim 14 is therefore patentably distinguishable over Rogers and Suliman at least for the same reasons.

Claims 17-19 depend from claim 16 and are distinguishable over the references at least for the same reasons.

Additionally, claim 13 includes limitations similar to those recited in claim 8, claim 14 includes limitations similar to those recited in claim 9, and claim 15 includes limitations similar to those set out in claim 10, and therefore each of claims 13-15 are further distinguishable over the cited art for at least the same reasons.

Accordingly, the withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 is respectfully requested.

As it is believed that all of the rejections set forth in the Official Action have been fully met, favorable reconsideration and allowance are earnestly solicited. If, however, for any reason the Examiner does not believe that such action can be taken at this time, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone applicant's attorney at (908) 654-5000 in order to overcome any additional objections which the Examiner might have.

Application No.: 09/800,830

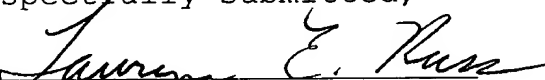
Docket No.: SONYJP 3.0-143

If there are any additional charges in connection with this requested amendment, the Examiner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 12-1095 therefor.

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Respectfully submitted,

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